



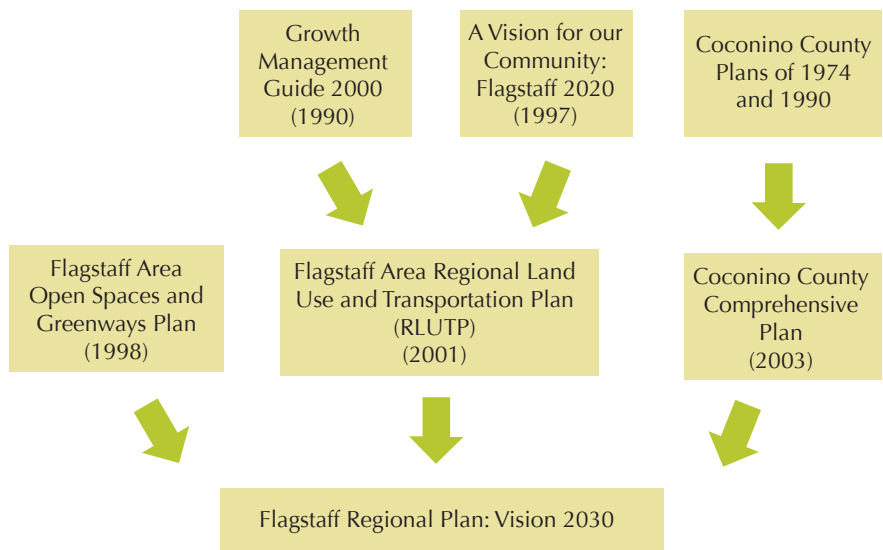
**FLAGSTAFF**



# HOW THIS PLAN WORKS

## Planning Background

The City of Flagstaff and Coconino County both have a long and successful history of land use planning. The former *Flagstaff Area Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan* (RLUTP) was adopted by the City Council and Coconino County Board of Supervisors in 2001. It was an outcome of *A Vision for our Community: Flagstaff 2020*, in which the goals and strategies under Managing Growth provided a number of suggested action items that led to the creation of the 2001 plan. The existing *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan* was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in 2003 to replace the County's plans of 1974 and 1990.



At the regional level, three previously approved planning documents have informed the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*:

- The predecessor to the RLUTP was the *Growth Management Guide 2000* adopted by the City Council in 1990.
- *A Vision for Our Community: Flagstaff 2020* is a detailed vision statement of what Flagstaff should be and what it should look like in the year 2020. This document was completed in 1997 as

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a joint effort of the City and County, as well as Northern Arizona University, Coconino Community College, the Flagstaff Unified School District, and community organizations. Approximately 5,000 citizens participated in the visioning and ultimate creation of this document. The *Flagstaff 2020* document addresses seven broad target areas: strengthening and sustaining community; protecting the environment; creating economic opportunity; managing growth; promoting family life, health, and safety; fostering human development; and improving housing and livability. The vision is still relevant, and many of the action items continue to be achieved.

- The *Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan* completed in 1998 was a collaborative effort by the City, County, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Arizona State Land Department, and Arizona Game and Fish Department. This plan identifies and categorizes the open spaces within and around the region, maps the open spaces most desirable to retain as open space, and establishes policies for the protection of open space. This plan was used extensively in development the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* document.

## How this Plan is Used

The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* is used for decision making so that Flagstaff city government is accountable for publicly derived policy outcomes and goals. It also provides the basis for policies and regulations to guide physical and economic development within the Flagstaff region. The plan will be used as a guide, or roadmap, for the future of the city and the region, and it establishes priorities for public action and direction for complementary private decisions, thus striving to establish predictability in the decision-making process.

Most importantly, the plan is used in the regulatory decision-making process by the City Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council and City planning, and staff from other City divisions. The Commission and the Council are responsible for making development decisions such as zoning map amendments or annexations, approval of which depends on whether the proposed changes or projects are consistent with the *Regional Plan's* goals and policies. The plan is also used to guide decisions related to the expansion of public infrastructure, for example the building or improvement of new roads and trails, investment in parks or public buildings, and other facilities. Many initiatives to improve the community start at the grassroots level. Thus, the plan may be used by all citizens in order to ensure that new development conforms to the plan and for assistance in implementing actions that will further the plan's vision and direction. Generally, the plan will be used as follows:

- **City Council**— will use the document to inform a final decision for most land use efforts including *Regional Plan* amendments, zoning map amendments, annexations, and development approvals. The *Regional Plan* should quickly provide a general background (why/intent), goals and policies (how), and a sense of priorities. The plan should also be broad enough to permit Council priorities to change between major plan updates.
- **City Planning and Zoning Commission**— serves in an advisory role to the City Council, and will use the plan similarly, possibly to provide a clear connection to supporting technical documents to best justify or explain their recommendations.
- **City Management (including legal counsel and division and section heads)**—also serve in an advisory role to the City Council, and will use the plan to review staff recommendations, assess high-level legal implications (e.g., property acquisition or impact issues), and explain budget and program recommendations (e.g., funding for master planning efforts, regulation updates).
- **Public Agency Staff**—will use the plan to develop and evaluate application of regulations to development requests such as *Regional Plan* amendments, zoning map amendments, subdivision plats, and other requests to make recommendations to management and governing bodies. The plan will permit staff to clearly communicate to applicants the community expectations and concerns relevant to the property in question, subsequent recommended modifications or conditions for approval, and the reasoning behind them. Further, the plan will be an essential tool for all City staff when, for example, prioritizing capital improvement projects, pursuing land acquisition, and developing agency budgets.
- **Development Community/Realtors/Prospective Buyers/Land Owners**—will use the document to determine the desirability of different development proposals on their properties, advise developers or owners on best available properties suitable to a proposed use or “highest and best use” for a given property, inform on the range of possible uses surrounding a property and their potential impacts on that property, and inform on long-range changes including infrastructure.
- **Interest Groups (e.g., environmental, business, education)**— like property owners, will use the plan to advocate positions on proposals or applications, but often on a broader range of policy issues. These groups may use the plan to advocate for or against new initiatives such as plans, infrastructure investments, educational programs, or business districts.
- **Resource Agencies**—will use the plan in discussions with the City on resource/agency management plans, joint agreements and cooperative initiatives.

CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING PHOTO

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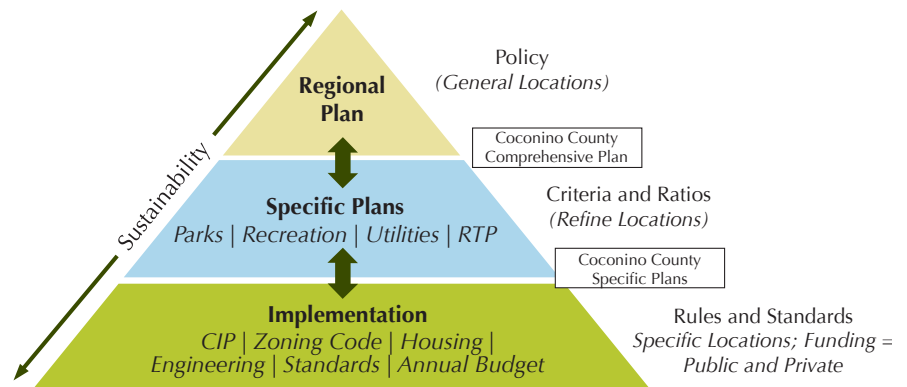


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- **General Public**—requires an accessible plan that allows them to decide—literally vote—on whether it represents the “right” direction for the region. The public may use the plan as a means of advocating positions on generally larger or more impactful proposals.
- **Future Generations**—will have the full benefits, as well as address the challenges, of this planning document.

## Implementing the *Regional Plan*

The relationship between the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* and such implementation tools as master plans, the Zoning Code, and other City codes is clearly defined in the illustration below; the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* establishes the vision for the future growth and development of Flagstaff and its surrounding area through clearly articulated goals, policies, and objectives. City-adopted master plans, the Zoning Code, and other City codes, on the other hand, implement the goals, policies, and objectives of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* by providing standards, regulations, and tools for land development.



The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* is intended to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the city. Implementation of the plan will evolve over time with new budgets, capital plans, work programs, and changing priorities, but listed below are some practical ways to ensure that future activities are consistent with the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*:

- **Capital Improvement Plans:** The City’s capital improvement plans and long-range utility and transportation plans will be prepared consistent with the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*’s land use policies and infrastructure recommendations (water, sewer, stormwater, transportation, and parks/recreation). Major new improvements that are not reflected in the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*, and which could dramatically affect the plan’s recommendations, should be preceded by a comprehensive update to the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*.

- **Development Approvals:** The approvals process for development proposals, including zoning map amendments and subdivision plats, are an important implementation tool of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*. The City of Flagstaff's Zoning Code (City Code Title 10) and the Subdivision Regulations (Title 11) will be updated in response to regulatory strategies presented in the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*.
- **Master or Specific Plans:** Master plans or specific plans should include a statement(s) describing how the plan implements *Flagstaff Regional Plan* goals and policies, and how it is compatible with the plan.
- **Economic Incentives:** Economic incentives should carry out *Flagstaff Regional Plan* goals and policies. Geographic areas identified by the illustrative plans should have high priorities for incentives and public/private partnerships. **[AMEND TO REFLECT THE OUTCOME OF THE RP]**
- **Private Development Decisions:** Property owners and developers should consider the strategies and recommendations of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* in their own land planning and investment decisions. Public decision-makers will be using the plan as a guide in their development-related deliberations.
- **Annual Work Programs and Budgets:** The City Council and individual City divisions will use the recommendations of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* when preparing annual work programs and budgets.
- **Future Interpretations:** The City Council should call upon the City Planning Director and Planning and Zoning Commission to provide interpretation of major items that are unclear or are not fully addressed in the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*. In formulating an interpretation, the Planning Director and Commission may call upon outside experts and other groups for advice. Minor items that require interpretation should be handled by the appropriate agency as it implements the plan.
- **Staff Reports:** When preparing reports to the City Council and City Commissions, staff reports should identify if and how the *Flagstaff Regional Plan's* goals and policies are being implemented.

## Relationship to Other Planning Documents

The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* incorporates, updates, and builds upon many past planning efforts within the Flagstaff region, and every effort has been made to ensure consistency with these other planning documents and to minimize conflicts.

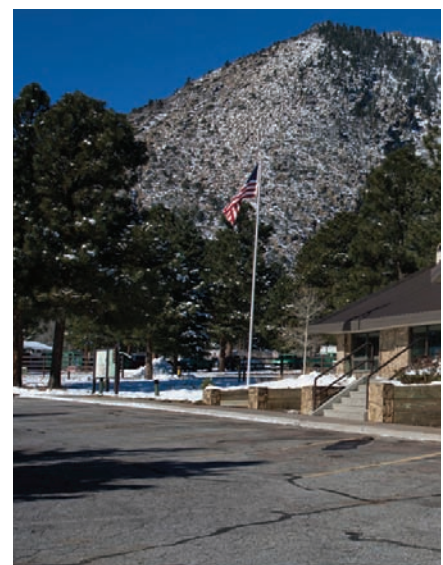


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## ***Flagstaff Pathways 2030 Regional Transportation Plan***

FMPO adopted the *Flagstaff Pathways 2030 Regional Transportation Plan* in December 2009 that identifies and prioritizes future transportation investments for roads, public transit, and trails. This plan evaluates the cost and effectiveness of projects for each major travel mode and addresses the relationships between land use, transportation, the economy, and the environment. This document is updated every five years.

### **Keeping the Plan Current**

The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* is a dynamic document that can be updated, revised, and improved upon over time to respond to emerging issues, new ideas, and changing conditions. To assess the plan's effectiveness, the City will need to monitor actions affecting the plan. As a result of these monitoring efforts or private development requests, the City will need to amend the plan periodically. The Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council members need to consider each proposed amendment carefully to determine whether or not it is consistent with the plan's goals and policies. In addition, the cumulative effect of many changes may result in a change in policy direction. For this reason, plan amendments must be evaluated in terms of their significance to overall City policy. Appendix B of this document provides a comprehensive summary listing of the goals, policies, and strategies for the plan, and will serve as a valuable tool to ensure any future changes or amendments are in keeping with the plan's original vision and intent.



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### **OTHER REGIONAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS**

There are two federal management plans for Walnut Canyon National Monument and Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument in the planning area. In addition, the Coconino National Forest has been working to revise its Forest Plan. At the county level, the *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan* adopted in 2003 also applies to the 460 square miles of unincorporated county land within the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* area. In addition, the County has 10 community area plans, of which five are within the area covered by the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*—Bellemont, Fort Valley, Doney Park Timberline-Fernwood, Kachina Village, and Mountainaire. These area plans also have goals and policies specific to each community and four of the five also have design review overlay guidelines which serve to ensure that new commercial buildings are compatible with the character of each community.

### **STUDY AREA PLANS**

Over the past decade, the City of Flagstaff's RLUTP proposed the development of special study area plans to deal with unique community and neighborhood issues, including, for example, the Southside 2005 Plan and the La Plaza Vieja Neighborhood Plan (2011). These study area plans were developed in close coordination with local residents.



This new *Flagstaff Regional Plan* does not supersede these plans. They will remain in effect except for any provisions that may conflict with this new plan, until such times as the plans are amended or repealed by the City Council. The *Flagstaff Regional Plan* attempts to integrate social, economic, aesthetic, and environmental issues described within the study area plans into physical manifestations, demonstrated in illustrative plans that will result in increasingly livable communities. Additional special area plans may also be created and adopted as amendments to the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*.

Appendix A contains a list of plan documents that implement or are related to the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*.

## ANNUAL PLAN REVIEW AND MONITORING

The purpose of annual reviews and monitoring is to ensure that it continues to reflect core community values and to evaluate how new developments have been approved in compliance with the plan. To achieve this, department directors will provide the City Manager and City Council an annual review of *Regional Plan*-related activities prior to the initiation of the budget process each year. This review will accomplish the following:

- Measure the City's success in achieving plan goals and policies through recommended strategies such as measuring on a per-project basis how sustainability indicators have been achieved
- Identify proposed strategies to be pursued under the coming year's budget
- Identify unlisted strategies that will achieve plan goals
- Document growth trends and compare those trends to plan objectives
- List development actions that affect the plan's provisions
- Explain difficulties in implementing the plan
- Review community indicators
- Review outside agencies' actions affecting the plan

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW

To ensure that the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* remains an effective guide for decision-makers, Flagstaff will conduct comprehensive evaluations of the plan every ten years as required by Arizona Revised Statute §9.461.05 and should address the following in addition to any state mandated requirements:

- Progress in implementing the plan
- Changes in community needs and other conditions that form the basis of the plan
- Fiscal conditions and the ability to finance public investments recommended by the plan
- Community support for the plan goals and policies
- Changes in state or federal laws that affect the City's tools for plan implementation



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## AMENDMENTS AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESSES

The codified processes described below serve as tools for City staff to implement the goals, policies, and strategies of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*. In addition, through public hearings when applicable, these processes provide opportunities for citizens to make recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council regarding the goals and policies of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*.

### Annexations

All proposed annexations will be evaluated for consistency with the goals and policies of this plan. The proposed annexation should not be detrimental to the majority of the persons or property in the surrounding area or the community in general. The City's basic position regarding annexation is that the annexation must demonstrate a favorable benefit to the taxpayers of the city. All applications for annexations of real property shall be reviewed, processed, and approved in conformance with Arizona Revised Statute §9-471 etc. seq. (Annexation of territory; procedures; notice; petitions; access to information; restrictions). Annexations may be initiated by the following:

- City Council or City Manager – The City Council or the City Manager may direct the Planning Director to review a specific property to determine whether it may be legally annexed and to contact property owners to determine whether they will sign an annexation petition.
- Property Owners – One or more property owners may submit an application to the City to annex property they own.



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## ***Flagstaff Regional Plan Amendments***

All requests for amendments to the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* as it relates to land within the corporate boundaries of the City of Flagstaff shall follow the procedures in accordance with the City Code Title 11, Chapter 11-10 (General Plans).

### **Zoning Code Amendments**

In accordance with the City of Flagstaff Zoning Code, Division 10-20.50, an amendment to the Zoning Map or the text of the Zoning Code may only be approved if:

- The proposed zoning map amendment(s) is consistent with and conforms to the goals and policies of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* and any applicable specific plans.
- If the application is not consistent with and does not conform to the *Flagstaff Regional Plan*, and any other specific plan, the applicable plan must be amended in compliance with the procedures established in the City Code Title 11, Chapter 11-10 (General Plans) prior to consideration of the proposed amendment(s).



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### **Public Development Projects**

City and County-sponsored projects and Capital Improvement Programs should be required to adhere to all applicable goals, policies, and strategies of the *Flagstaff Regional Plan* through project planning and budgeting to ensure funding is available to implement the plan as determined.